

TEAM DECISION MAKING IMPLEMENTATION: SOME ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN PLANNING

- **ASSESS EXISTING PROCESSES:** Review all current 'family team' or other collaborative processes, assess for potential redundancy, blend where possible, delete if appropriate – streamline! Create a continuum that makes sense to families and is efficient for staff and others.
- **DECIDE ON SEQUENCING OF IMPLEMENTATION:** If unable to implement for all types of placement-related decision making, prioritize: perhaps implement in one geographical area at a time, or implement everywhere but with phased-in meeting types (eg, first all removal meetings, then all change of placements, then reunifications, etc.)
- **GATHER DATA:** To determine how many facilitators needed, how many meetings, etc.: Must know how many removals per month (plus how many near-removals which could be prevented by a team meeting); also how many changes of placement; how many reunifications; how many other permanency decisions (eg TPR, guardianship, etc.)
- **LOGISTICS:** Rooms for meetings, child care, security, communication of available meeting slots to after hours staff, invitations to family members at point of emergency removal, etc.
- **SUPPORT NEEDS:** Telephone scheduler, automated scheduling system, inviter of community representatives, etc.
- **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:** Who might attend on behalf of family's home neighborhood? How to invite them?
- **POLICY CHANGES:** How to ensure no child is removed (or moved, or reunified, etc.) without a TDM meeting? Accountability mechanisms, mandatory attendees, checks & balances, clarity re: who has authority to make decisions on behalf of agency, appeal process, etc. Also may necessitate changes in contracts with private foster care providers.
- **AGENCY CULTURE CHANGE:** Need a plan for staff to learn more about TDM, its underlying values, connection to F2F outcomes, etc. Allow staff to participate in planning.
- **COURT ORIENTATION:** Be sure to share plans with Court, reassure them of how TDM will complement the work of the Court, etc.
- **TRAINING PLANS:** Not only for facilitators. All staff and external participants need readiness training/orientation to understand process and their role in it. (Don't forget private foster care providers, other public and private agencies with whom agency partners, et al.)
- **DECISIONS ON ATTORNEY PARTICIPATION:** Consider pros/cons.

